

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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UNITED CHURCH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE HELD

The Evangelism Committee of the United Church held a conference under the leadership of Rev. Ken Saeki, chairman and Rev. Hatsushi Chiba, vice-chairman from December 7 to 9 at Lacey Kan in Hayama. About fifty ministers, including the chairman of the 14 districts and the special departments met to decide the basic policy for 1961. Previously, each department made its own policy but now it is the function of the General Secretary to make policy. Instead of deciding policy each year, a longer range 10 year plan will be made and then within that framework the one year plans will emphasize the aims and objects from the General Assembly.

Two emphases from Dr. Kraemer's report were emphasized at the conference-the need for self-renewal of the members of the staff and the need to think out and take a creative role in the approach to society.

The Rev. Mr. Saeki said that the conclusions of Dr. Kraemer's report were not so startling to the Japanese leaders for they had come to the same conclusions, but that the had arrived at the same conclusions independently was very surprising to them. Mr. Saeki said more concern has to be given to the aim, purpose and method of evangelism. We must think out how we are to transmit this Gospel that we have been given.

DR. KRAEMER'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE CHURCH SITUATION IN JAPAN

Dr. Hendrik Kraemer left Japan on December 2 after a very full schedule of lectures, consultations and preaching. He held 25 consultations which included meetings with such groups as the YMCA-YWCA, the Non-Church Movement, the NCC, and non-Christian groups.

On November 25th he met with the staff of the United Church and made a report, from which excerpts are given below.

Already a pattern of church life is established in Japan, and he suggested the advisability of establishing a new type of church life with the congregation becoming more central. The 'church' seems to be the idea of the minister and the building. There is a need to study further a new idea of the church with the believers as central. He also mentioned the difficulty of livelihood for the pastors and the need to do outside work makes it difficult for the role of the pastor to develop.

The church must take an interest in the social problems in society. Many people have a tendency to respect the church but feel it must stay at a respected distance. The Church has a high potentiality in the present society, it should become the creative minority and take a more prophetic role in the local and rural areas. They should also express themselves more in social opinions. For example, in considering the meaning of democracy the church should lead in thinking out the meaning. Evangelism in Japan has emphasized 'direct' evangelism, but since Japan is a more advanced country culturally indirect evangelism should be considered more fully.

Although the United Church is a member of the WCC and there is an ecumenical movement in Japan, the ordinary pastor does not understand or have an interest in the ecumenical aspects of the church. To do effective evangelism, it is necessary to have cooperation between church groups. This is not the period of denominational or sect evangelism. Missionaries also should work together more cooperatively for evangelism. When there are only 300,000 - 400,000 Protestants, denominationalism and non-cooperation between missionaries becomes a problem.

The present church in Japan resembles the early apostolic church in that it exists as a minority in a hostile world. In the early times of course there were persecutions, but the early church took a creative role and conquered the whole empire. The difference lies in the fact that the present is a modernized and secularized society. Although Japan is modernized to the 1960's there is an old traditional element in Japanese culture which the Christian must study more fully. The Japanese church has not been modernized, it still exists as in the 19th century. New religions should be studied and institutes such as in Kyoto should be used to study them more effectively.

TENTATIVE MERGER SCHEDULE FOR LUTHERAN MISSIONS ANNOUNCED

The Mission Association Representatives of the Augustana Synod, Suomi Synod and the United Lutheran Church met to talk over the mer-

ger of their missions since their respective churches are merging in the States. The tentative schedule is for the first draft of the constitution to be completed by June 1961, with approval by February 1962 and the merger scheduled to take place January 1963. At present there are 35 missionaries serving with the Augustana Synod, 3 with the Suomi Synod and 55 with the United Lutheran Church missions.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE SPONSORS GIFTS FOR CHILDREN ON ISLANDS NEAR OSHIMA

This is the fifth year that students in Christian schools in the Yokohama - Tokyo area have given gifts for children in depressed areas through the "Gift of Love Movement" sponsored by the Church World Service. The CWS hopes that the giving of these gifts will be the beginning of a continuing relationship. Two years ago students of Tokyo Toyo Eiwa Sho Gakko gave presents to the Towada Ko Sho Gakko and last year the students enjoyed meeting one another when the Eiwa students took an excursion trip to Lake Towada.

This year it was decided to give presents to the students of schools on the small islands south of Oshima Island. Over 40,000 people live on these small isolated islands. There are over 45 middle schools and high schools. Schools in Japan are graded into 5 categories according to the equipment, size of school and its standing, with class 5 being the lowest. Only schools in the 4th and 5th categories were selected, 20 of which are primary and 16 are middle schools. Pupils attending these schools number 5,843. Gifts and contributions are being accepted until December 28th but will not be delivered until January. Some of the islands are serviced by boat only once a month, if the weather is unfavorable the boat must turn back due to lack of harbor facilities. The gifts will include clothing, stationery, books, sporting equipment, transistor radios and pump organs. Fifteen Christian schools are participating in the movement this year.

Some schools are also sending books to the miner's children in the Kyushu area where students went on caravans last summer.

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING SHOWS INCREASE IN JAPAN

AVACO(Audio Visual Activities Committee of the National Christian Council of Japan) has just completed an overall survey of religious broadcasting in Japan taken by means of questionnaires sent to each broadcasting company. One hundred percent returns on the survey indicate that the amount of religious broadcasting over private stations in Japan has approximately doubled since 1956.

In 1956, 0.58% of all radio broadcasting time was occupied by religious programs. In November of 1960 the percentage of religious broadcasting was 1.03%. The percentage of broadcasting time occupied by Christian programs in 1956 was 0.41% and in 1960 was 0.71%. The rate of increase of programs of other religions has been more rapid than that of Christian groups during the past four years. This is true both because the awakening of other religions to the importance of broadcasting and because they have started from a lower plateau of total activity.

The survey, based on a cross-section taken in November of 1960, revealed a total each week of fifty-four different sponsored religious programs and fourteen sustaining programs, for which the station makes the time available free. Of the fifty-four sponsored programs twenty-nine were Protestant and three Catholic. There were thirteen Buddhist, four Shinto, and four programs by new religions among the sponsored programs. Of the non-sponsored or sustaining time programs, three were Protestant, one Catholic, five Buddhist, four Shinto, and one new religious group.

In the matter of total broadcasting time, however, Protestant programs occupy over two-thirds of the total time (0.693%). This is due to the fact that the Lutheran Hour is broadcast over some eighty stations, programs of the Pacific Broadcasting Company over a similar number, and other Protestant broadcasts often are over five to a dozen stations. Thus Protestant broadcasts occupy a total of 2,310 minutes each week, Catholic programs 210 minutes and all other religions some 990 minutes.

Protestants concentrate upon sponsored programs because most groups broadcasting wish to make a more pointed appeal on behalf of Christianity than can be made on free time granted by the stations and also most groups invite writing in for Bibles or Bible study courses and consider the radio ministry inadequate unless such followup can be conducted. Stations do not permit write-in appeals on free time.

The new religions, which pay for time for broadcasting, are the "Seicho no Ie" (two programs) and the "PL Kyodan" (two program). "Seicho no Ie" also has one sustaining program. Most of the programming of other religions is conducted by the large old-line Buddhist and Shinto organizations. This includes broadcasting by the "Tenrikyo" sect which is sometimes classed as a new religion.

In format most of the Christian programs follow a traditional order of hymn and sermon, and the programs of other religions are almost without exception straight lectures with perhaps a musical theme at opening and closing. These programs often invite inquirers to write in for further information. Exceptions to the about are the programs of the Lutheran hour which uses a half hour drama format; those of AVACO, which use documentary drama or interviews; the United Church of Christ (Kyodan), which uses the professionally-narrated witnesses of lay Christians; and the Seventh Day Adventists, who use occasional drama, story-telling and other formats. Religious broadcasting tends to be concentrated in the Sunday morning hours.

The above statistics do not include religious broadcasting over the Government networks. Approximately one percent of the time on Government networks is allotted to religious broadcasting and this time is allotted on a fairly equal basis to the three major faiths - Buddhism, Shinto and Christianity. AVACO provides speakers and music and advises on production and formats for all Protestant broadcasting on the government networks.

Private broadcasting in Japan dates from the end of the Pacific War. The National Broadcasting law provides for freedom in the

realm of religious broadcasting only proscribing content which threatens the national order, attacks upon other religions or claiming exclusive validity for one religion in a way which reflects adversely upon another religion.

There is relatively little regular religious broadcasting as yet upon television. The one sponsored program is the Oral Roberts program, weekly on Sunday morning in the Tokyo area. A local choir is used together with film clips of the evangelist's sermon from the American program with lip synchronized sound in Japanese. Time is provided free for a forty minute program each Sunday morning in the Tokyo area by NTV (Channel 4), this time being utilized by representative groups of the three major faiths. A spokesman of the government TV network recently stated that NHK-TV is also planning the introduction of religious television programming.

Each year at Christmas time for the past four years AVACO has arranged the broadcasting of one or more Christmas candlelight worship services in the Tokyo area sponsored by businessmen. In addition, AVACO films have been televised, especially during the Christmas season, in various parts of Japan.

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--- Season's Greetings to all from the staff ---

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